



Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women

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Media Glossary

Adapted from the Diversity Digest: www.diversityweb.org.

A PRESS RELEASE is a two- to four-page report of a newsworthy event. It is written as an article; portions of good news releases often appear in print. A news release should include a contact to call for further information, a headline, a first sentence that grabs the reader, quotes, and background information. It is normally released the day of the event.

A MEDIA ADVISORY (or MEDIA ALERT) is a one-page dated announcement of an upcoming event that is open to the media. It includes a contact to call for further information, and is sent to assignment editors, reporters, editors, and producers to alert them to an event they should cover. It is normally released at least one day prior to the event (more time for weekly newspapers and weekly columnists).

A PRESS STATEMENT is used to respond quickly to a breaking story (such as a highly publicized incident on campus) by providing journalists with quotes they can insert easily into their stories. Statements must be prepared quickly and be less than one page. They should be dated and include a contact name and phone number. Statements are faxed to media as early as possible on the day they are covering the incident or event. Statements must be quotable.

A BACKGROUNDER is an in-depth explanation of an issue that is designed to help reporters who may be uninformed report more accurately.

A FACT SHEET is a one-page information sheet that often contains statistics or other data.

A MEDIA PACKET is distributed at a news conference, press briefing or in response to a request for information. Media packets contain news releases, statements, backgrounders, fact sheets and materials that are not designed specifically for the media (newsletters, brochures, papers, textbooks, etc.).

A CALENDAR ANNOUNCEMENT is a short, one-page notification of events that are of interest to the public. A calendar announcement is intended to be aired on television or to be published.

PITCH LETTERS are personalized notes that specifically urge a particular media outlet to cover an event or issue. They often describe a particularly newsworthy aspect of the event.

AN EDIT MEMO is a short memorandum to editorial page editors or members of an editorial board that asks them to devote space to an issue. A good editorial memorandum contains several well-written paragraphs that can be lifted and used in an editorial.

AN OP/ED PIECE is a 500- to 700-word signed guest editorial that is submitted for publication to newspapers. An op/ed piece emphasizes the writer's opinion or experience and is of interest to the general public.

A LETTER TO THE EDITOR responds to reports or editorials with a confirming or opposing point of view, often expanding on a point made in the original article. Letters to the editor should be brief no more than a page, four or five very short paragraphs and are intended for publication.